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ABSTRACT

The extent to which regional variations in socioeconomic circumstances influence the educational mobility patterns of rural youth and the nature of those influences is explored in this cross-national comparative study. The study drew upon data from 3 modern, industrialized societies: Germany, Norway, and the United States. The study population is described as (1) elementary or secondary school students at a stage in the educational career track immediately prior to a major decision-making point; (2) essentially rural; and (3) more or less "total populations" of students at the specified "terminal grade" level in the schools serving the selected regional areas. The areas were chosen to represent a fairly wide range of rural socioeconomic circumstances within each of the 3 societies. Data, from questionnaires administered in classrooms by research staff or regular school personnel, were collected in Germany during the spring of 1965; in Kentucky, spring, 1968; and simultaneously, in West Virginia and Norway, spring, 1970. It was determined that the major theme that emerged concerned social differences in the structuring, by regions, of educational opportunities. The findings indicate that in the United States rural industrialization enhances the quest for higher education while the educational opportunities and upward educational mobility ambitions of lower class youth are depressed in areas of limited economic opportunity, such as Appalachia. In Europe, where educational systems are managed by the state, upward educational mobility exists as a meaningful option for youth in all areas. Six tables and a figure comparing the 3 countries' educational systems are included. (FF)

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# Regional Variations in the Educational Mobility of Rural Youth: Norway, Germany and the United States[1]

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Sociological efforts to explain the educational goals and career plans of American high school students are increasingly focusing attention on the effects of social environments and contexts. Recent studies have dealt with a number of important structural variables such as size and socioeconomic character of the school, neighborhood, or community of residence[2] and, on an interactional level, with the nature of peer group associations.[3] The search for rural-urban differences is often a central concern and, although this variable is becoming more elusive as rural areas become more modernized, it has generally been observed that youngsters reared in relatively more isolated rural environs are less likely to want a college education than are youth from more urbanized settings.[4]

The social context thesis commonly used as a basic point of reference in forumlating a researchable approach to various facets of this general problem has been articulated in a variety of forms (see, for example, the writings and research reports of Natalie Rogoff, Seymour Martin Lipset, James Bryant Conant, James Coleman, Ralph Turner, William H. Sewell, and Archie Haller).[5] An adequate development of this approach, nevertheless, invariably requires (as a matter of theoretical rigour) or leads to (as a matter of good common sense) a consideration of the socioeconomic composition of the groups or ecological entities being investigated. Thus, the term "social context" usually connotes "socioeconomic character" and, in most cases, research has focused on the problem of ecological segregation at the level of community, neighborhood, or school district.

Communities and neighborhoods, however, as well as school districts and peer groups, are not discrete social phenomenon and they should be viewed as such only in a limited sense. These "lower-order" entities are

located, as sub-systems, within the matrix of larger structural units, such as economic and cultural regions and, of course, societies, and their socioeconomic character is reflective of and influenced by the socioeconomic character of the larger structural unit. Indeed the form they manifest, although distinctive, nevertheless may be an appropriate adaptive response to exigencies that have been shaped by more general environmental circumstances. Thus, for example, while two communities may be structurally dissimilar in terms of socioeconomic characteristics and residential patterns, they may also be functionally equivalent in terms of the needs of the larger social systems of which they are a part. The meaning, or sociological significance of a seemingly discrete "social context", then, is dependent in some respects upon the nature of its own unique social environment.

Furthermore, the importance, if any, of community and neighborhood contexts in the formation of educational aspirations and career ambitions may be modified considerably by variations in the distribution of educational opportunities (i.e., by the structuring of access to a society's educational resources and facilities) and, likewise, by the balance between educational and work opportunities within an area. It is quite possible, for instance, that the potential behavior-molding influence of a particular community context is overshadowed (or exaggerated) by the socioeconomic realities of its regional situation and/or by the institutionalized developmental strategies peculiar to the given society. In both cases, the validity, i.e., the universality, of empirically grounded sociological generalizations may be at stake and, consequently, the practical utility of sociological "knowledge" may remain questionable.

For these and other reasons, social context explanations of the patterning of educational mobility should be broadened to take into account larger entities

such as economic regions and, where possible, the structural characteristics of society. The present paper reports some findings from a project that was designed with this goal in mind.[6] Its purpose is to explore (1) the extent to which regional variations in socioeconomic circumstances influence the educational mobility patterns of rural youth and (2) the nature of those influences. The research was organized as a cross-national comperative study drawing upon data from three modern, industrialized societies: Germany, Norway, and the United States. The resulting macro-sociological perspective serves not only to broaden the scope of generalization but also provides an additional basis (albeit suggestive, not definitive) for interpreting the meaning of regional variations in educational mobility patterns within American society.[7]

Comparative Perspectives

These three societies--Germany, Norway, and the United States--are structurally similar in many respects; they share certain broad, overarching political, ideological and cultural traditions. They are "Westernized," "modernized", "bureaucratized", "democratically-governed", "industrialized" and, as nations, caught-up in the frantic tempo of competing in world markets. Their dominant institutional configurations tend to emphasize individual achievement, the nuclear family, and rationality in decision-making. In short, if one were to construct a meaningful typology of world societies, these three would undoubtedly fall within the same general range or class; they belong to a particular type of "culture region" and represent a distinctive kind of "civilization."[8]

The educational systems of Germany, Norway and the United States, however, are markedly different (see Figure One) and, although practical consid-

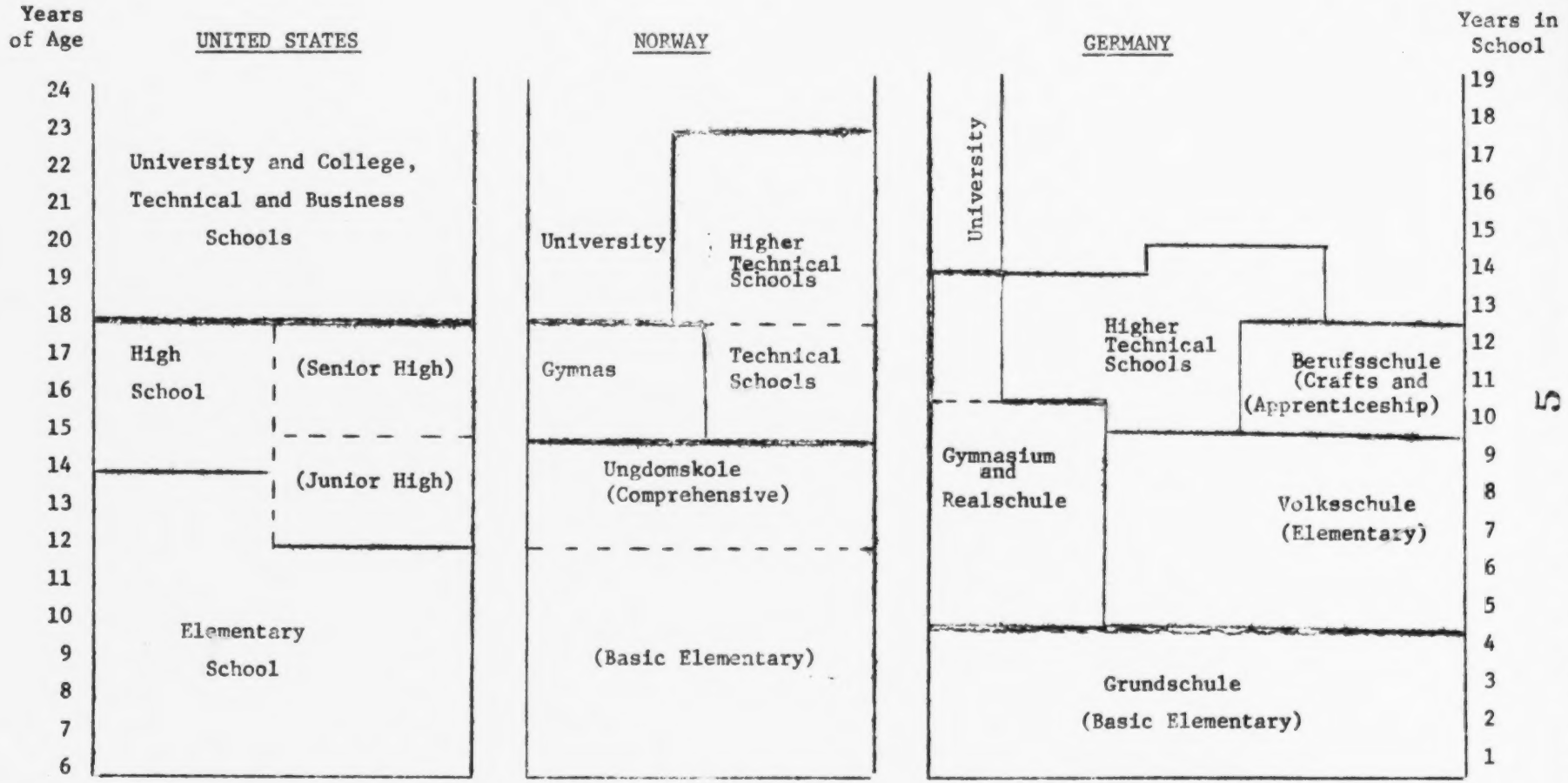


FIGURE 1. Simplified diagram comparing American, Norwegian and German Educational systems. The many local variations and the numerous types of specialized schools are not shown. Heavy lines indicate the critical (structurally--defined) points at which students are sorted-out and tracked toward higher academic education.

erations weighed heavy, it was because of those differences that these particular societies were selected as research sites. The resulting comparisons provide a basis for studying the "educational structure" and, to the extent that the regional areas surveyed represent a "wide range" of rural socioeconomic circumstances within each society, the findings will shed some light on the functional consequences of one or the other type of educational system within the context of a modern industrial state.

The Norwegian educational system, despite some rather dramatic recent reforms, tends to be highly selective.[9] In addition to six years of elementary school all youngsters are now required to complete three years of the newer comprehensive school (ungdomskole). The latter is comparable in many ways to the American junior high school. At the end of the ninth year, when most students are about 16 years of age, examinations are given to determine who is academically qualified to go on to the secondary school level (gymnas). Normally a three year program, the gymnas is roughly equivalent to the American senior high school and the first year or two of junior college. Students who successfully complete the gymnas and pass the terminal exam (examen artium) are eligible to apply for admission to a university; even then, admission standards are very rigid and opportunities rather limited.

In the German system of education, the "sorting-out" of youngsters for secondary schools occurs even earlier than in Norway--at about age 10 or 11. At that branching-off, the level of future career alternatives is, for all practical purposes, established.[10] About one-fourth of the German youth population gains entree to the secondary school track (Gymnasium or Realschule): the "decision", however, is less a matter of merit than of parental interest and encouragement. Only those who successfully complete the ninth year of

Gymnasium and pass the terminal exam (Abitur) are eligible to attend the university; an increasingly common path to the top, however, is by way of the higher technical schools which require only six years of secondary schooling. For those who remain in the elementary school track, 2 or 3 years of additional vocational training or apprenticeship beyond the Volksschule level is mandatory; at that point, since the option of an academic goal has been virtually by-passed, most youngsters are eager to begin a work career.

Thus, although these three societies are not extremely dissimilar in sociocultural orientations, socioeconomic character and level of structural differentiation, they differ markedly in terms of the system of education by which they "sort-out" young people for work roles in society. The German system is organized along almost caste-like lines' it emphasizes very early selection, family sponsorship, and relatively rigid tracking and, as a result, it is extremely sensitive to traditionalized social class norms at the crucial decision-making points. The Norwegian system, much like the British, can also be described as a sponsorship model; although it too emphasizes fairly early selection and relatively rigid tracking, sponsorship is attained essentially on the basis of prior academic achievements and, as a consequence, the system is <u>seemingly</u> less vulnerable to class biasing. The American system, on the other hand, resembles a contest model;[11] "dropping-out" is considered a "problem" and those who can not or will not compete tend to be stigmatized as failures. Structural barriers to upward mobility are not rigidly formalized and entry into elite status is a prize to be won by those who are willing and able to take advantage of opportunities that, according to the American ideology, are open to all; as a result, academic achievement is to a large extent dependent upon motivation to succeed.

Societal differences in the manner by which educational resources and facilities are distributed should also be noted. The American system, which places considerable burden on local authority and local resources in developing educational opportunities, is, consequently, far more likely to manifest local and regional inequalities than would state-supported systems, such as in Norway and Germany. In the U.S., for example, the recruitment of teachers is essentially a local matter and most rural school teachers are drawn from areas nearby. In most European countries, however, the recruitment of teachers to staff village schools is more open nationally and, in that sense, more competitive; teachers are regarded as employees of the state and as such their teaching goals may be more directly oriented toward national rather than localistic norms.

Research Procedures

The study populations can be described as: (1) elementary or secondary school students at a stage in the educational career track immediately prior to a major decision-making point; (2) essentially "rural", since schools in large metropolitan areas are not included; and (3) more or less "total populations" of students at the specified "terminal" grade level in the schools serving the selected regional areas. The areas were chosen to represent a fairly wide range of rural socioeconomic circumstances within each of the three societies (see Table One).[12]

In the U.S., the investigation deals with high school seniors and their plans to go on to college. In Norway and Germany, however, in order to achieve some basis for comparability with U.S. graduating seniors, both primary and secondary school populations were surveyed at a critical point in the educational track. Hence, the German phase deals with pupils in the

terminal class of Volksschule and their plans to acquire some additional full-time, formal schooling beyond that level, and also with students in the terminal class of Realschule or in the sixth year of Gymnasium and their plans to attain the Abitur (i.e., to be in a position to go on to the university). Similarly, the Norwegian phase deals with pupils in the terminal class of ungdomskole and their plans to go on to the gymnas, and also with students in the terminal class of gymnas and their plans to go on to the university. Because the secondary schools in Europe draw students from diverse areas, these segments cannot be regarded as "total populations" from any specified area; their inclusion in the present study, however, provides a basis for general comparisons.

Data were collected during four separate, but coordinated, phases of field work: in Germany in the spring of 1965; in Kentucky in the late spring of 1968; and simultaneously, in West Virginia and Norway in the spring of 1970. Questionnaires were administered in classrooms either by a member of the research staff (in the U.S. case) or by regular school personnel who had been instructed on the proper procedures through meetings with the research directors and school officials (in the German and Norwegian cases).

For each phase, development of an appropriate instrument was preceded by at least two stages of preliminary field work. The first stage consisted of probing, semi-structured interviews with students representing various segments of the study population. In light of this information, a pre-test questionnaire was formulated and administered in selected classrooms; the second stage results provided a basis for designing the final version. It was essential, of course, that the form of data collection be tailored to the specific circumstances, language patterns, and experience world of the particular study population. The Norwegian questionnaire, for example,

was not and--in order to assure even a modest degree of equivalency--could not have been a simple literal translation of the American questionnaire (nor could identical code keys be used in preparing the collected information for analysis). Throughout, the goal was to achieve "comparability" in so far as possible and at all stages of the research process.

For this paper, the main variables are dichotomized. Plan for further education (beyond the immediate level and leading to a higher academic track) is the independent variable, i.e., the principle criterion. Father's occupational status (nonmanual-manual) and place of residence (rural-urban) are introduced to elaborate the search for regional effects.

Regional Study Populations Compared

Tables One and Two outline certain basic descriptive characteristics of the study populations. Although a detailed discussion cannot be undertaken here, some of the more relevant points of comparison must be noted.

In all three societies, the socioeconomic data derived from the study populations show that the areas designated as "rural, low-income" manifest patterns consistent with that designation. If one takes into account the relative proportions of American high school seniors from rural and lower class backgrounds, Eastern Kentucky is clearly a "pocket of rural poverty"; the heavily industrialized area of Western Kentucky, on the other hand, is without doubt the more affluent of the four U.S. regions. Similarly, although regional differences are less marked in Norway than in the United States, the East Hedmark area--near the Swedish border--is the more rural and less affluent of the three Norwegian regions. But the commercial farming - diversified industrial area of West Hedmark seems to be somewhat better off than the heavily industrialized Nordland area. In the German case, Lauter-

bach is the more rural of the three areas and, comparing it with the industrial area of Giessen and the commercial agricultural area of Warendorf on the basis of census data reported elsewhere, clearly the least modernized.

Because father's occupational status is used to elaborate the regional effect, it is important to note the pattern of relationships, by region, between this variable, the rurality variable, and other SES indicators.[13] Table Three shows that: (1) its association with father's level of schooling is consistently high in all areas of the U.S. and Norway; (2) its association with family level of living is moderately high in Norway and the U.S. as a whole, but tends to vary by region and is negligible in the rural depressed area of Norway; and (3) its association with place of residence, i.e., rurality, is consistently high in Norway and the U.S., except for the Western Kentucky industrialized area which has experienced an urban "flight to the fringe", and tends to be weak and to vary considerably by region in Germany. The Norwegian settlement patterns, one should note, are more like those of the U.S. whereas the German pattern tends to have grown out of the closed Gemeinde tradition.

For the purposes of this paper, then, father's occupational status appears to be a very strong correlate (and presumably a good predictor) of father's educational level, but is somewhat less useful as an indicator of the family's level of affluency and place of residence. The regional socioeconomic situation undoubtedly affects the distribution of occupational rewards. In any event, it is clear that this status variable measures an important dimension of social class (a dimension particularly relevant to educational mobility) and, along with the place of residence variable, it can be introduced into this comparative analysis as a meaningful indicant that manifests a reasonable degree of cross-cultural equivalence.

FINDINGS

In the following discussion of findings, which must necessarily be brief, many fascinating and useful lines of inquiry tangential to our present concern will be overlooked. Special attention, nevertheless, is directed toward assessing the relative ambition and life chances of youth in rural depressed areas (Appalachia, East Hedmark, and Lauterbach); from a comparative perspective we may gain some useful insights into the nature of the structural barriers to upward mobility that exist within the less developed regions of the modern world.

Focusing first on the proportion of students, by region, who are planning further formal schooling (Table 4), we observe that regional variations appear more obvious in the United States. Percentage differences between regional study populations in Norway and in Germany are not as sharply delineated nor as consistent in direction.

In the American case, the heavily industrialized area of Western Kentucky has the larger proportion of high school seniors planning college while the rural depressed areas of Appalachia have the lower proportions: these differences are especially evident for boys. In Norway and Germany, on the other hand, the industrialized areas of Nordland and Giessen have the smaller proportions of ungdomskole or Volksschule students planning further advanced schooling; indeed, youngsters in the relatively less developed rural areas seem to have a similar if not greater chance for upward educational mobility as their counterparts in the more prosperous commercial farming or industrialized areas. The European pattern of regional variations, in other words, appears to be the reverse of the American pattern.[14]

Social Class Factor

Controlling on father's occupational status (Table 5), we find that the marginal observations, i.e., those concerning the nature and direction of regional variations, are generally supported.[15]

In the case of boys, however, the regional effect in the United States is slightly stronger for those from manual worker class families whereas in both Norway and Germany it is clearly specified for those from nonmanual worker class families. Indeed, it is rather surprising that the sons of manual workers in the less prosperous East Hedmark area are more inclined to plan on a gymnas education than are the sons of manual workers in the more prosperous areas of Norway. Also, one should note that boys from white collar class families in the industrialized Nordland area are far less likely to be gymnas oriented than are their counterparts in the other areas and, as a result, the correlation between social class and educational plan among boys in that region is unusually low; a similar regional pattern prevails among German Volksschule boys. Thus, while the pattern of class effect (i.e., the Q relationships) for boys does not vary a great deal by region in the American case, it varies considerably in both Norway and Germany; the socioeconomic characteristics of the industrialized areas in Europe appear to depress the educational ambitions of middle (nonmanual) class boys.

The pattern of regional variations in the educational mobility plans of American girls is essentially undisturbed when father's occupational status is taken into account and, with one exception, is basically similar to that of boys. (Eastern Kentucky girls from manual worker families, for whatever reasons, manifest an unusually strong college orientation relative to their schoolmates and also relative to manual worker class girls in other

regions). In the case of Norwegian girls, the regional effect pattern is like that of Norwegian boys, tending to be greater among those from nonmanual worker families; among German Volksschule girls, on the other hand, it is specified for those from manual worker families. For Norwegian girls, however, the class effect does not vary to any marked degree by region (even in the Nordland area, Q = +.59); this suggests that, although regional circumstances seem to determine the manner by which social class effects the educational career plans of Norwegian boys, social class is a consistently important factor for girls regardless of regional circumstances. Among German Volksschule girls, the class effect pattern, by region, tends to be the opposite of that for boys: it is essentially very weak except in the industrialized area of Giessen where, it seems manual worker class girls are not very interested in further full-time schooling. (Hence, we observe an intriguing phenomenon: the educational ambitions of middle class boys and working class girls in the industrialized area of Germany tend to be depressed relative to their counterparts in other areas.)

Clearly, then, these data show that regional variations in educational mobility patterns exist to some degree in each of these societies even when father's occupational status is taken into account. The more important finding, however, is that while youngsters in the rural depressed areas of the United States (Appalachia) are at an obvious educational disadvantage vis-a-vis their counterparts in the more prosperous industrialized areas, the analogous pattern of regional effect does not hold for the European cases. Indeed, there is some evidence to suggest that youngsters residing in European equivalents of rural Appalachia (East Hedmark and Lauterbach, to be sure, are merely crude approximations · they cannot be "equated" with Appalachia)

are more likely to be educationally mobile than are their peers in the more industrialized areas. This European form of "compensatory effect" is an especially important factor to consider in explaining the educational career patterns of middle-class boys and, to a lesser extent, of lower class German Volksschule girls.

It should be noted that the overall (marginal) effect of social class on educational plans, generally rather substantial except in the case of German Volksschule girls, is considerably reduced at the secondary school level, especially in the Norwegian case. Once sponsorship has been achieved within a formally structured system for sorting out young people for elite statuses in society, the social class factor is no longer as obviously an important determinant of upward social mobility.

Rurality Factor

The regional study populations were selected on the basis of a variety of social indicators to represent a fairly wide range of rural socioeconomic circumstances. Community and neighborhood contexts, of course, are also quite variable within each of these regions. In the mountain coal camps and subsistence farming neighborhoods of Appalachia, for instance, the social environment is in many ways different from that of the larger towns and urban centers of the region. To take such variability into account in the search for regional effects, we controlled on place of residence, using a simple dichotomy indicative of the rural-urban character of the student's community-of-origin.[16]

Table 6 shows that "urban" youth are more inclined to be educationally mobile than are "rural" youth. This observation holds moderately strong in the American case and, in Norway, for both boys and girls at the ungdomskole

level and for girls at the gymnas level; place of residence, however, has little effect on the plans of Norwegian gymnas boys to enter the university. In Germany, the overall (marginal) influence of the rural-urban variable appears negligible; but we have no way of knowing, of course, the extent to which it has influenced the earlier sorting-out for the gymnasium track at age 10 or 11.

Among American high school seniors, the regional effect is clearly specified for the rural segment. It doesn't seem to matter a great deal, especially in the case of boys, whether the high school seniors reside in one of the larger towns of Appalachia or in an urban center of Western Kentucky; the probability of being college-oriented is about the same, regardless of region. But for rural youth, particularly boys, regional context makes a big difference: high school seniors from mountain neighborhoods in Appalachia are far less likely to be oriented toward college than are their "rural" counterparts in Western Kentucky.

Again, the interesting case of Eastern Kentucky girls should be noted. Rural girls in that subsistence agricultural area of Appalachia who have make it through the senior year of high school manifest an unusually high level of college aspirations; as a result, the place of residence effect is practically negligible. Some evidence is available suggesting that this pattern is neither a transitory nor an isolated phenomenon[17]; the reasons for its persistence, however, are unclear and merit further study.

In Norway, regional variations in the proportions planning to enter the gymnas tend to be weakened among rural girls; for all other segments, however, the previously noted (marginal) patterns of regional effect are obtained when place of residence is controlled. Nevertheless, the magnitude of relationship between rurality and educational plan varies considerably by region. For boys,

it is strongest in the more heavily industrialized area and weakest in the less prosperous farming area. Hence, compared with findings reported by Table 5, it appears that, relatively speaking, the more important determinant of gymnas plan for boys is place of residence in the Nordland region and social class in the West and East Hedmark regions. For girls, on the other hand, the rurality effect is relatively weak in the northern and eastern regions and somewhat stronger in the commercial agricultural area. (This pattern resembles that of the regional pattern for American girls· the Mingo area, an Appalachian coal county, may be an unusual exception.)

In Germany also, the basic (marginal) pattern of regional effect tends to persist when place of residence is controlled· among urban girls, however, it is somewhat weakened. Surprisingly, we find that, in the two predominantly agricultural areas, rural Volksschule girls are more inclined toward further full-time schooling than are their urban counterparts or, for that matter, than are urban girls in the industrialized Giessen area. A similar, though not as obvious a pattern is evidenced for boys. Among both Volksschule boys and girls, nevertheless, the resulting regional variations in the effect of rurality on educational plan are rather startling. The correlations are negative (and realatively strong for boys) in the industrialized area; negligible in the commercial agricultural area; and positive (and relatively strong for boys) in the rural, low-income area. Clearly, in the German case, at least at the Volksschule level, regional circumstances seem to "suppress" the effect of place of residence.

These findings, then, reveal some noteworthy comparative differences in the distribution of educational aspirations and, by inference therefore, in the structuring of access to educational opportunities in these three societies.

Regional socioeconomic contexts in the United States seem to have a marked impact upon the educational ambitions of rural high school seniors, especially rural boys, to the disadvantage of those living in rural depressed regions such as Appalachia. In Norway and Germany, on the other hand, the effect of rurality tends to be either very weak or positive in the less prosperous rural regions: among European boys especially, the negative effect of rurality is greatest in the more industrialized regions, This latter phenomenon is quite the reverse of that found in the United States.

SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION

Employing data from a cross-national, comparative study, this paper explored the effect of regional socioeconomic circumstances on the educational mobility patterns of rural youth in three modern, industrialized societies. Norway, Germany, and the United States, it was argued, are essentially similar in levels of differentiation but markedly dissimilar in educational structures: many of the differences noted, therefore, in the patterning of educational aspirations or plans may be attributed to those basic differences in the form of sorting-out young people for elite statuses in society.

The various findings uncovered in the process of searching for regional effects, although they offer a series of fascinating diversions from our main concern, will not be repeated here. Suffice it to note that regional circumstances appear to have some effect upon educational mobility patterns in all three countries even when social class and place of residence are taken into account. Thus, we submit, the social context thesis -- elevated to the level of regional analysis -- merits further attention by both American and European sociologists. Regional circumstances, clearly, should not be ignored in specifying the conditions under which this or that generalization holds about the social-psychological determinants of educational ambitions. It is at least incumbent upon the researcher to consider the intricate and often unique interplay of social and cultural variables that may characterize a particular regional situation and, moreover, to take these specifications into account when positing the scope of his generalizations.

Finally, from a cross-national, comparative point-of-view, the major theme that emerged from this study has to do with societal differences in the structuring, by regions, of educational opportunities. (Let it be noted again,

however, that these findings should be regarded as suggestive rather than definitive: further verification of the observed patterns is necessary before the hypotheses generated by this study can be presented in the form of generalizations.)

In American society, where emphasis is placed on local authority and local resources in developing educational facilities, rural industrialization enhances the quest for higher education and appears to coincide with the opening-up and modernization of educational facilities. In areas of limited economic opportunity such as Appalachia, on the other hand, educational opportunities are also limited and, as a result, the upward educational mobility ambitions of lower class youth are markedly depressed. Since industrialization means that the entire system of opportunities is pushed upwards, the net effect of rural industrialization in American society may be to foster greater regional inequalities.

In Europe, where educational systems are managed by the state, upward educational mobility exists as a meaningful option for youth in all areas, inclusive of the rural hinterland. With the industrialization of a formerly agricultural area, an additional option is added that tends to draw off many youngsters into the industrial job market. We have observed, for example, that rural youth in the low-income rural areas of Germany and Norway are inclined to seek a "way out" through further schooling; in the industrialized areas, where jobs are readily available, education is not as attractive an option for their rural counterparts. Thus, we submit, the European pattern of development exerts an equalizing pressure on the stratification system.

A great deal of research work remains, of course, before the comparative theme suggested by these findings and outlined in cursory fashion above can be posited with confidence. Nevertheless, it is quite clear at this point

that in generalizing about upward mobility patterns of rural youth one should consider the balance between educational and industrial opportunities and the socioeconomic realities of the regional context.

FOOTNOTES

1. This paper is based upon data collected through a series of field surveys organized by the author with the help, guidance, and collaboration of Professor H. Koetter and Dr. M. Buffen at the Institute fuer Agrarsoziologie, der Justus-Liebig Universitaet, Giessen, Germany; Professor James S. Brown and Dr. Donald Bogie at the University of Kentucky; John Marra and Thomas Lyson at West Virginia University; and Professor Helge Solli and Dr. Lynne Lackey at the Norges Landbrukshogskole in Vollebek, Norway. The author wishes to express his appreciation to these and the many other people and agancies that helped to facilitate this work.

2. See, for example: William H. Sewell, "Community of Residence and College Plans", American Sociological Review, Vol. 29, No. 1, February, 1964, pp. 24-38; William H. Sewell and J. Michael Armer, "Neighborhood Context and College Plans", American Sociological Review, Vol. 31, No. 2, April, 1966, pp. 159-168; Alan B. Wilson, "Residential Segregation of Social Classes and Aspirations of High School Boys", American Sociological Review, Vol. 24, December, 1959, pp. 843-844; John A. Michael, "High School Climates and Plans for Entering College," Public Opinion Quarterly, Vol. 24, Winter, 1961, pp. 585-595; and Harry K. Schwarzweller, "Community of Residence and Career Choices of German Rural Youth", Rural Sociology, Vol. 33, No. 1, March 1968, pp. 46-63.

3. James S. Coleman, "Academic Achievement and the Structure of Competition," Harvard Educational Review, Vol. 29, Fall, 1959, pp. 330-351; Archie Haller and C. E. Butterworth, "Peer Influences on Levels of Occupational and Educational Aspirations," Social Forces, Vol. 38, May, 1960, pp. 289-295.

4. See the numerous references cited by Sewell, op. cit., p. 24-25.

5. Natalie Rogoff, "Local Social Structure and Educational Selection", in A. H. Halsey, Jean Floud, and C. Arnold Anderson, editors, Education, Economy, and Society, Glencoe: The Free Press, 1961, pp. 242-243; Seymour M. Lipset, "Social Mobility and Urbanization", Rural Sociology, Vol. 20, September-December, 1955, pp. 220-228; James S. Coleman, The Adolescent Society, New York: Free Press of Glencoe· 1962; Ralph H. Turner, The Social Context of Ambition, San Francisco: Chandler, 1964; William H. Sewell and J. Michael Armer, op. cit.; and Archie Haller and William H. Sewell, "Farm Residence and Levels of Educational and Occupational Aspiration," American Journal of Sociology, Vol. 62, January, 1957, pp. 407-411.

6. The project design was dictated in part by practical considerations; funds were not available for a cross-sectional survey. By building a data base from a number of diverse regions, however, and by employing an intra-societal comparative approach wherever appropriate, it is possible to explore the situational validity of findings and, at least in that sense, to gain greater confidence from generalizations that emerge from the cross national study. In that respect, the research reported here, while it does not represent the main line of inquiry of the larger project, is nevertheless a necessary adjunct to that study. Moreover, it provides a unique opportunity to view a series of survey replications within a diversity of socioeconomic contexts under controlled conditions.

7. For purposes of this study, the term "region" is used in a very loose sense to refer to a relatively small but recognizable geographical area that is generally regarded as having a fairly distinctive kind of socio-economic character with respect to economic conditions and social life. In other words, we are dealing with "sociocultural areas" of the kind discussed by Charles P. Loomis and J. Allan Beegle, Rural Social Systems, Prentice-Hall, 1950, pp. 254-56. For further clarification, see Donald W. Bogie, "Sociocultural Differences Among Three Areas in Kentucky as Determinants of Educational and Occupational Aspirations and Expectations of Rural Youth", unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, 1970, University of Kentucky, pp. 23-24.

8. See Robert M. Marsh, Comparative Sociology, New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1967; and I. Schapera, "Some Comments on Comparative Method in Social Anthropology", American Anthropologist, Vol. 55, 1953, pp. 353-62.

9. A more detailed discussion is provided by Lynne Lackey in an unpublished Ph.D. dissertation (in process), University of Kentucky.

10. For a more detailed discussion and references, see Harry K. Schwarzweller, "Educational Aspirations and Life Chances of German Young People", Comparative Education, Vol. 4, No. 1, November, 1967, pp. 35-49.

11. Ralph H. Turner, "Sponsored and Contest Mobility and the School System", American Sociological Review, Vol. 25, December, 1960, pp. 855-867.

12. Selection of these areas was based upon the judgement of professional sociologists familiar with the socioeconomic situations in the respective states (e.g., Professor James S. Brown, Professor H. Koetter, and Professor H. Solli) as well as a comprehensive analysis of the sociodemographic characteristics of the areas judged to be appropriate research sites.

13. Note that data on father's education and family level of living are not available for the German study population. In the Norwegian and American cases, where these data are available, a composite SES scale was developed based upon five-category scales of father's education and family level of living. See Lynne, Lackey, op. cit.

14. One may also observe that "sex biasing" appears to be a less important factor in the United States than in Norway or Germany. In the American study population only about 3 percent more boys than girls plan on college. In the Norwegian case, however, about 6 percent more boys than girls plan on gymnas and, once in the gymnas, boys are far more inclined toward the university than are girls. In Germany, where the next step up the educational ladder from Volksschule is some kind of technical or business school, we find 8 percent more girls than boys planning to go on: at the secondary school level, however, 15 percent more boys than girls plan to complete the ninth year (Abitur).

15. For Norway and the United States, parallel analysis employing dichotomized versions of the Norwegian and American SES scales (which are a composite of father's educational level and family level of living) reveals an almost identical pattern of findings. The degree of association (Q) between educational plan and social class is: +.62 for U.S. boys; +.58 for U.S. girls; +.52 for Norwegian ungdomskole boys; and +.61 for Norwegian ungdomskole girls. Regional variations in relationships and in percentage distributions are very much like those observed with the occupational status variable.

16. In the American and Norwegian phases of the study, place of residence was determined by checked responses to a structured item in the self-administered questionnaire; "farm" and "open-country, not farm" are classed as "rural", and "town" or "city" are classed as "urban". In the German phase, respondents supplied the name of their home community and these places were then coded according to population size (1961 census); villages with less than 2000 persons were classed as "rural", and towns with larger populations as "urban".

17. A similar study in 1959 of high school seniors in four Eastern Kentucky counties found that the level of college aspiration of girls was almost on a par with that of boys; 32 percent of the boys and 31 percent of the girls expected to enter college. See Harry K. Schwarzweller, Sociocultural Factors and the Career Aspirations and Plans of Rural Kentucky High School Seniors, Lexington: Kentucky Agricultural Experiment Station, Progress Report 94.

    Likewise, Gregory and Lionberger found that the college attendance plans of high school senior girls in 1964 in the Ozark region of Missouri was at a higher level than that of boys. See Cecil L. Gregory and Herbert L. Lionberger, Occupational and Educational Plans of Male High School Seniors, Columbia: Missouri Agricultural Experiment Station, Research Bulletin 937, p. 13.

TABLE 1. Descriptive characteristics of regional study populations

| Study Population | Total N | Location | Socioeconomic Character of regional area | Number of Schools Surveyed | Level of Schooling |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| United States, high school | (2313) | | | (21) | |
| West | 575 | western Kentucky, Owensboro area | semi-rural, heavily industrialized | 2 | graduating high school seniors |
| Central | 617 | bluegrass Kentucky, around Lexington | commercial farming, diversified industry | 5 | |
| East | 643 | eastern Kentucky, Appalachia | rural low income, subsistence farming | 8 | |
| Mingo | 478 | southwest W.V., Appalachia | rural low income, coal mining | 6 | |
| Norway, primary school | (1396) | | | (15) | |
| North | 471 | Nordland-Narvik | heavily industrialized, some farms, mining | 6 | graduating students |
| West | 524 | Hedmark West, Hamar | commercial farming, forestry, some industry | 5 | "ungdomskole" (comprehensive school) |
| East | 401 | Hedmark East, Sor Trondelag | rural low income, poor agriculture | 4 | |
| Norway, secondary school | ( 446) | schools in all three areas | schools serve diverse areas | ( 5) | "gymnas" |
| Germany, primary school | (1670) | | | (112) | |
| Giess | 499 | southern half of Kreis Giessen, Hesse | industrialized villages, heavy industry nearby | 11 | graduating students |
| Waren | 688 | Kreis Warendorf, Westfalia | commercial farming, diversified industry | 41 | "volksschule" |
| Lauter | 483 | Kreis Lauterbach, Hesse; Vogelberg | rural low income, marginal farming | 60 | |
| Germany, secondary school | ( 885) | schools in all three areas | schools serve diverse areas | ( 19) | sixth year "gymnasium and realschule" |

TABLE 2. Socioeconomic characteristics of regional study populations (percentages)*

| Regional Study Population | "Rural" residence (open country, small village) | "Manual" work status of father | Father's education level | | Family level of living | | Composite SES score high ** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | high | low | high | low | |
| United States, high school | (66.4) | (75.4) | (14.2) | (68.3 | (52.1) | (30.4) | (46.7) |
| West | 61.0 | 73.3 | 18.3 | 53.9 | 72.0 | 13.6 | 66.0 |
| Central | 58.0 | 72.2 | 20.0 | 62.7 | 58.0 | 23.5 | 54.4 |
| East | 84.8 | 83.5 | 9.0 | 82.2 | 29.7 | 52.6 | 25.0 |
| Mingo | 58.8 | 71.6 | 8.7 | 74.3 | 50.2 | 30.1 | 42.3 |
| Norway, primary school | (38.0) | (68.4) | (22.9) | (51.4) | (24.1) | (45.3) | (42.6) |
| North | 28.0 | 70.7 | 21.2 | 55.4 | 21.3 | 45.3 | 38.5 |
| West | 34.9 | 63.6 | 28.4 | 45.7 | 30.2 | 38.5 | 49.0 |
| East | 53.5 | 72.0 | 17.5 | 54.2 | 19.5 | 54.1 | 39.0 |
| Norway, secondary school | (37.8) | (49.8) | (41.6) | (27.8) | (43.3) | (22.4) | (69.2) |
| Germany, primary school | (46.5) | (82.7) | | | | | |
| Giess | 54.5 | 77.4 | | | | | |
| Waren | 19.2 | 83.1 | | (NO INFORMATION AVAILABLE) | | | |
| Lauter | 77.2 | 87.7 | | | | | |
| Germany, secondary school | (21.5) | (31.2) | | | | | |

NOTES: *In no case should one assume the cross-societal equivalency of these scales, except perhaps with the manual-nonmanual worker dichotomy. Simple cross-national comparisons should be avoided.

**The SES score is a composite of father's educational level and family level of living. The percentages reported here refer to a dichotomized version of that scale.

TABLE 3. Associations (Gamma or Q) between occupational status of father and other socioeconomic variables; regional study populations compared.

| Regional Study Population | Degree of association with father's nonmanual status* | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | "rurality"* (residence place) | father's level of schooling** | family level of living** | composite SES score** |
| United States, high school | (-.56) | (+.72) | (+.57) | (+.69) |
| West | -.36 | +.69 | +.45 | +.71 |
| Central | -.59 | +.74 | +.67 | +.72 |
| East | -.57 | +.78 | +.62 | +.75 |
| Mingo | -.64 | +.71 | +.39 | +.57 |
| Norway, primary school | (-.64) | (+.73) | (+.55) | (+.72) |
| North | -.63 | +.72 | +.62 | +.76 |
| West | -.69 | +.72 | +.71 | +.81 |
| East | -.64 | +.72 | +.10 | +.49 |
| Norway, secondary school | (-.63) | (+.75) | (+.65) | (+.78) |
| Germany, primary school | (-.24) | (NO INFORMATION AVAILABLE) | | |
| Giess | -.22 | | | |
| Waren | -.15° | | | |
| Lauter | -.45 | | | |
| Germany, secondary school | (-.34) | | | |

NOTES: * Father's status and residence place are treated as dichotomies
** Father's level of schooling, family level of living, and the SES score are trichotomies (The SES score is a composite of father's schooling and family level of living)
° In this case, the observed association is not reliable; P is less than .05 (based upon Chi square value derived from contingency table frequencies).

TABLE 4. Percentage planning further education, by sex; regional study populations compared.

| Regional Study Population | Percentage planning further formal education* | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | BOYS | | GIRLS | |
| | N | % | N | % |
| United States, high school | (1161) | (41.9) | (1152) | (39.3) |
| West | 296 | 56.4 | 279 | 51.3 |
| Central | 293 | 43.3 | 324 | 37.7 |
| East | 331 | 33.5 | 312 | 37.8 |
| Mingo | 241 | 33.6 | 237 | 29.5 |
| Norway, primary school | ( 695) | (34.7) | ( 701) | (28.8) |
| North | 235 | 27.6 | 236 | 23.2 |
| West | 270 | 38.0 | 254 | 34.8 |
| East | 190 | 38.9 | 211 | 27.5 |
| Norway, secondary school | ( 243) | (56.8) | ( 203) | (37.3 |
| Germany, primary school | ( 900) | (17.7) | ( 770) | (25.6) |
| Giess | 273 | 14.3 | 226 | 19.0 |
| Waren | 365 | 21.9 | 323 | 30.0 |
| Lauter | 262 | 15.3 | 221 | 25.8 |
| Germany, secondary school | ( 472) | (66.6) | ( 413) | (51.5) |

NOTE: *"Further formal education" refers to college for U.S. students, gymnas for Norwegian ungdomskole students, university for Norwegian gymnas students, any formal schooling beyond the compulsory Berufschule level for German Volksschule students, and completion of the Abitur for German gymnasium students.

TABLE 5. Percentage planning further education, by father's occupational status; regional study populations compared.

| Regional Study Population | BOYS: % planning further formal education | | GIRLS: % planning further formal education | | Q* relationship; educational plan & father's occupational status | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | By father's occupation | | By father's occupation | | | |
| | nonmanual | manual | nonmanual | manual | Boys | Girls |
| United States, high school | (69.0) | (35.8) | (65.2) | (33.4) | (+.60) | (+.58) |
| West | 78.5* | 50.0 | 76.8 | 43.5 | +.57 | +.62 |
| Central | 68.8* | 34.8 | 67.1 | 28.1 | +.61 | +.68 |
| East | 63.8* | 28.4 | 55.3 | 36.5 | +.63 | +.37 |
| Mingo | 60.0* | 29.6 | 57.1 | 22.6 | +.56 | +.64 |
| Norway, primary school | (53.8) | (27.5) | (51.1) | (18.8) | (+.51) | (+.64) |
| North | 36.4 | 24.8* | 41.1* | 15.1* | +.27° | +.59 |
| West | 65.1 | 26.0* | 58.3* | 21.4* | +.68 | +.68 |
| East | 53.7 | 33.3* | 51.9* | 19.7* | +.40 | +.63 |
| Norway, secondary school | (61.8) | (53.5) | (39.1) | (34.8) | (+.17)° | (+.09)° |
| Germany, primary school | (32.9) | (14.7) | (34.1) | (24.2) | (+.48) | (+.24) |
| Giess | 20.3 | 12.3* | 30.0* | 16.6 | +.29° | +.37 |
| Waren | 41.3 | 18.1* | 37.3* | 29.9 | +.52 | +.16° |
| Lauter | 40.7 | 12.6* | 35.5* | 23.1 | +.65 | +.29° |
| Germany, secondary school | (71.2) | (55.9) | (56.0) | (41.9) | (+.32) | (+.28) |

NOTES: * indicates that the observed variations are not statistically significant; P is less than .05.

° indicates that the observed association is not reliable; P is less than .05 (based upon Chi square value).

TABLE 6. Percentage planning further education, by residence place; regional study populations compared.

| Regional Study Population | BOYS: % planning further formal education | | GIRLS: % planning further formal education | | Q* relationship; educational plan and rurality of residence | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | By place of residence | | By place of residence | | | |
| | Urban | Rural | Urban | Rural | Boys | Girls |
| United States, high school | (56.4) | (34.7) | (48.5) | (34.5) | (-.42) | (-.28) |
| West | 62.4* | 52.5 | 57.0* | 47.7 | -.20° | -.19° |
| Central | 52.4* | 36.5 | 49.6* | 29.3 | -.31 | -.41 |
| East | 60.9* | 29.1 | 44.2* | 36.5 | -.58 | -.16° |
| Mingo | 52.1* | 21.9 | 40.2* | 20.9 | -.59 | -.44 |
| Norway, primary school | (39.8) | (26.4) | (32.7) | (21.6) | (-.30) | (-.28) |
| North | 32.1 | 15.5 | 25.7 | 16.4* | -.44 | -.28° |
| West | 44.0 | 28.4 | 39.6 | 23.2* | -.33 | -.37 |
| East | 45.9 | 32.6 | 33.3 | 23.1* | -.27° | -.25° |
| Norway, secondary school | (59.9) | (52.2) | (44.7) | (25.6) | (-.15)° | (-.40) |
| Germany, primary school | (19.2) | (15.7) | (27.1) | (23.9) | (-.12)° | (-.09)° |
| Giess | 18.8 | 8.7 | 23.7* | 15.8 | -.42 | -.25° |
| Waren | 22.1 | 22.2 | 29.4* | 32.0 | +.01° | +.06° |
| Lauter | 7.7 | 17.9 | 20.5* | 27.7 | +.45 | +.20° |
| Germany, secondary school | (67.0) | (65.4) | (53.7) | (42.9) | (-.03)° | (-.21)° |

NOTES: * indicates that the observed regional variations are not statistically significant; P is less than .05.

° indicates that the observed association is not reliable; P is less than .05 (based upon Chi square value).